In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b), also enclosed, in Appendix A, is a version of the above replacement paragraphs marked-up to show all the changes relative to the deleted paragraphs.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please delete claims 9-16 and 35 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1-8, 17-23, 27-28 and 30-33. A clean version of the amended claims is set forth below. In accordance with 37 CFR § 1.121(b), also enclosed, in Appendix B, is a marked up version of these claims to show amendments made in them:

1. (Once Amended) A hydrogel for use in the treatment or prevention of arthritis, said hydrogel comprising about 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

2. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 1, which is made by combining acrylamide and methylene bis-acrylamide in a molar ratio of 150:1 to 1000:1.

3. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 1, comprising less than 15% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

4. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 3 comprising at least 1% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

5. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 1 further comprising at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

6. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 1 comprising at least 80% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

7. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 1 having a complex viscosity of 2 to 25 Pa s.

8. (Once Amended) The hydrogel according to claim 1 having a complex viscosity less than 25 Pa s and an elasticity modulus less than 200 Pa.

17. (Once Amended) A method of treating or preventing arthritis comprising administering a hydrogel to a mammal, said hydrogel comprising 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

18. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel is obtained by combining acrylamide and methylene bis-acrylamide in a molar ratio of 150:1 to 1000:1.

19. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises less than 15% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

20. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 19, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 1% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

21. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel has a complex viscosity of about 2 to 25 Pa s.

22. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel further comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

23. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 22, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 80% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

27. (Once Amended) A prosthetic device comprising about 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel, said device administered to the intra-articular cavity of a joint.

28. (Once Amended) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the hydrogel further comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

29. (Once Amended) A prosthetic device for augmenting or replacing cartilage in the intra-articular cavity of a joint, said device comprises a polyacrylamide hydrogel comprising about 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

30. (Once Amended) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the hydrogel further comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

31. (Once Amended) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, implanted or injected into an intra-articular cavity of a joint.

Please add new claims 36-44 as follows:

36. (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water.

37. (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 90% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

38. (New) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 75% by weight saline solution.

39. (New) The method according top claim 17, wherein the hydrogel has a complex viscosity of about 2 to 25 Pa s.

40. (New) The prosthetic device according to claims 27 or 29 which is used for treating arthritis or augmenting or replacing cartilage in the intra-articular cavity of a joint.

41. (New) The hydrogel according to claim 1, obtainable under conditions of radical initiation and washing with pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

42. (New) The hydrogel according to claim 1, comprising less than 3.5% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

43. (New) The method according to claim 16, wherein the hydrogel comprises less than 3.5% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

44. (New) The hydrogel according to claim 1, obtainable by combining acrylamide and methylene-bis-acrylamide in amounts so as to give about 0.5 to 25% by weight acrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

REMARKS

I. SPECIFICATION IS AMENDED TO CORRECT INFORMALITIES. CLAIMS ARE AMENDED PRIMARILY TO PLACE THEM IN U.S. FORMAT.

Applicant amended the specification to correct minor errors and informalities. Applicant also amended some claims primarily to place them in a format recommended for U.S. patent practice. All amendments are supported by the specification as filed, considered as a whole. For example, amendments of claims 1, 27 and 29 are supported by the disclosure at page 3, lines 1-5 and page 4, line 13.

Applicant cancelled claims 9-16 and 35 with reservation of all of Applicant's rights to pursue the subject matter of these claims in this or any related applications.